

1793
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A
COUNTRY PARSON'S
ADDRESS

TO HIS FLOCK,

TO
CAUTION THEM AGAINST BEING MISLED BY THE

Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing,

OR RECEIVING

JACOBIN TEACHERS OF SEDITION,

WHO INTRUDE THEMSELVES

UNDER THE

Specious Pretence

OF

INSTRUCTING YOUTH AND PREACHING CHRISTIANITY,

By FRANCIS WOLLASTON,

RECTOR OF CHALKENURST IN KENT.

"What I say unto YOU I say unto ALL,
WATCH."

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. WILKIE, PATER-NOSTER-ROW.

1799.

JOHN R. L. L. L.

TO HIS

CAUTION WHEN USED IN THE

BRITISH MUSEUM

BRITISH MUSEUM



INSTITUTION OF JUDITH AND ALBERTUS UNIVERSITY.

BY FRANCIS WOLFE

RECTOR OF CHURCH OF ST. MARY

WATER

WATER

LONDON

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY

1792

This has given Occasion for the following Address, which, though designed for his own Black, he thinks may have its Use, in cautioning others against a Practice of the Jacobin Societies, of which few are sufficiently aware. It were to be wished,

ON Sunday Morning, April 7, 1799, the Author heard of there being Two Sermons intended to be preached on that Day in his Parish. Well aware of the insidious Plans of the Enemies to our Peace, he lost no Time in making Inquiry concerning this; and, having obtained one of the following Hand Bills, declared most decidedly his Disapprobation of the Thing, together with his Reasons for so doing, both in the Church Porch before Divine Service, and in a Vestry after it. The Hand Bill was in these Words:

“April 5, 1799.—On Sunday the 7th Instant, a SUNDAY SCHOOL will be opened at Chislehurst, at a House nearly opposite to Mr. Mace’s Academy,

by the Union Society of Greenwich;

where Children will be taught Reading and Spelling, to reverence God and to obey their Parents. Books necessary for their Instruction will be found by the Society. Hours of Attendance from $\frac{1}{2}$ past 9 to $\frac{1}{2}$ past 11 in the Morning, and from 2 to 4 in the Afternoon. TWO SERMONS will also be preached at the same Place, Service to begin in the Morning at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 11, and in the Evening at 6 o’Clock.”

This has given Occasion for the following Address; which, though designed for his own Flock, he thinks may have its Use, in cautioning others against a Practice of the Jacobin Societies, of which few are sufficiently aware. It were to be wished, that the Law gave to the Minister of a Parish the Power of proceeding, in a summary Way, against such as intrude unasked into the Fold committed to his Care.

at 6 o'Clock.
 Morning at 10 past 11, and in the Evening
 at the same Place, Service to begin in the
 TWO SERMONS, will also be preached
 Morning, and from 2 to 4 in the Afternoon.
 Attendance from 1 past 9 to 1 past 11 in the
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 Parents. Books necessary for their instruction
 spelling, to reverence God and to obey their
 where Children will be taught Reading and
 of the United Society of Friends.

Mr. Mace's Academy

at Chichester, at a House nearly opposite to

SUNDAY SCHOOL will be opened

April 1799. On Sunday the 7th Instant a

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COUNTRY PARSON'S

ADDRESS

TO HIS FLOCK.

My dear Friends and Neighbours,

THE awful state of the world, and the uncertainty of what is portended by it, make me lament at times my inability to impress upon your minds in the place I ought, the comforts which true Religion affords. Not that these things have been omitted to be inculcated by my Assistant in that office, or that he has failed of stating them in a most proper manner, for indeed he has not; but that I am conscious it is my peculiar duty to do it. Nothing but the weakness of declining years, which I feel more than others perceive, should keep me from exerting myself at this time as heretofore in my ministration among you. I know and feel most sensibly your kindness in excusing it; and I trust, that you are sensible, though I cease to appear before you as your preacher, I am not quite unmindful of you or your concerns.

But there are some things I wish to explain to you, which are barely proper for the pulpit; and

which yet I have a desire to lay before you: the progress of that irreligion against which you may remember I have often and often cautioned you; which now stalks forth with gigantic strides in other nations, while it is sapping the foundation of every thing that is good among us.

If this related solely to the duties of religion or to morality, the church would certainly be no improper place wherein to point out the mischief. But since its baneful influence extends to the political existence of our country, it is a subject much better adapted to an address of this kind. And since, to guard against any poison, it is necessary to know it; and the knowledge and extent of this, are not to be obtained without much reading or conversing with knowing men upon the matter; and that reading is dispersed in many volumes in various languages; I have thought it might prove of service to you, were I to give you a general insight into it: that you may know from one, who is conscious he has never deceived you, the poisoned cup that now is offered to you, the snares that surround us all, and against which it behoves us all to unite with most watchful care.

That there have been unbelievers from the earliest ages is most certain. The light that strikes conviction on one, often fails of doing it on the mind of another. This is neither to be wondered at, nor lamented. No man deserves blame for withholding assent to what he sees no reason to believe:

lieve: and his doubts, lead the believer into a farther examination of the grounds on which he believes. But a bare want of conviction is one thing, and the shutting of the eyes and ears against all evidence is another; and the perverting of evidence and knowingly falsifying it, and systematically misleading mankind into a contempt for it, is a third, which admits of no excuse, but deserves the most sharp reprehension.

Yet is this unhappily the case at present.

Perverseness there has at all times been in some individuals, and an attempt to invalidate the arguments for religious belief; under a false notion that if religion were set aside, all restraints upon the evil propensities of men would be removed, and they might give free scope to their passions without any control. But a systematic plan to undermine religion, by the formation of *societies* with that intent, has been reserved to these days: for though the outline was laid many years ago, and has gradually been filling up in secret, and taking different forms as occasions have presented themselves, it is but of late that the consequences have burst forth into open day.

The origin of this we must trace back nearly seventy years: from the time when Voltaire, a celebrated French writer, ambitious of fame, opened his career with attacks upon Christianity. Being reproved by the magistrate, and asked whether he thought he could root out christianity from the

earth, he replied, that the world should see. His friend and biographer tells us this with complacency, as if he thought it redounded to his credit. But alas! the world has seen him keep his promise too well. That life which was prolonged to him almost half a century after this declaration; and those talents for writing, which he certainly possessed to a high degree, and which might have been employed for the advantage of mankind; were from that time dedicated solely to the perverting of them from the truth. Books after books were published by him in a most plausible and captivating style, in prose and in verse, in jest and in earnest; every art of ridicule, of blasphemy, of obscenity, of falsehood, of sophistry, was employed, and again and again repeated in every form a fertile imagination could devise, to captivate the heart and inflame the passions, or to mislead the unwary judgment. Pains were taken by him to draw to himself associates in that unhallowed cause; and under the specious name of Philosophers, to arrogate to themselves the sole claim to wisdom and understanding above the rest of mankind. His view, he tells us himself in several of his letters was (it is almost blasphemy to relate it, Voltaire's aim was) and the desire of his heart, to crush Jesus Christ; to crush that infamous wretch, as he calls him at every turn. Crush him, then; crush him, crush him, is the conclusion of very many of that arch-fiend's letters.

With this end in view, he spared no pains in courting the vain heart of Frederick II. the great king of Prussia; who, out of the false ambition of being flattered by such a man as Voltaire, seconded his plan; and by his royal influence forwarded the scheme of the master, in stamping the name Philosopher on these propagators of Sophistry in the world. An academy was proposed to be established as a seminary for the training of youth in that way of thinking; and Cleve was allotted to Voltaire by Frederick for that purpose. But a more refined and insidious friend (d'Alembert) in the mean time, discovered a channel of less observation; that of introducing some members of their society into the academies in France. Among Them this false philosophy gained ground; who seeing through the pageantry of popery, and observing the immoral lives of many of its votaries, were too ready to suppose the whole of christianity to be a mere fiction; and instead of rejecting the corruptions of it, rejected without sufficient examination the substance.

With the same wicked design, and under the auspices of Voltaire, a most voluminous work was undertaken, called the Encyclopaedia; drawn up by these false philosophers. Professing to be a dictionary of all science; but in which, by sophistry and false reasoning, by mis-stating some things and misconstruing others, all the avenues to knowledge and to sound reasoning, are tainted with their insidious poison.

By

By these and other arts of the same stamp, which need not to be pointed out to you in this short address, he gained to himself a set of associates, who, under the specious name of philosophers, were to be considered as the only true reasoners, and standards of knowledge; to whom, not only the young and the unwary, but the vain pretenders to superior parts were brought actually to look up with implicit belief; and, retailing some of the obscene jests or licentious sarcasms of the master, considered themselves as the wits of the age, and were complimented by each other as men of strong understanding, far above the prejudices of vulgar minds.

While this was doing in respect of religion and morality; other insidious doctrines began to take their rise, from other causes, and with different views. Rousseau, another celebrated writer in the French tongue, under the plausible veil of humanity, which might have place in his heart though it could find none in Voltaire's, sent forth his work on the origin of the social compact: an ideal scheme; pretending, as if all government really had taken its rise originally from an agreement between all the individuals of which it is composed, and no government could be legal which had not that origin. That in theory this appears true, must be acknowledged: but that in fact it never has been, nor ever can be put into execution, is as true too. Yet the plausibility of the scheme, and the fascinat-
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ing style of the writer, have misled the unwary, and sapped the foundations of all the governments which ever existed in the world. Of this we shall see more by and by.

An antient Order, concerning the antiquity of which I shall say nothing, because its origin and all its transactions are involved in mystery, the order of Freemasons; established as many declare upon the best principles of benevolence, while others have ascribed to it less innocent designs; has certainly of late years adopted into its bosom a great number of these false brethren, and enabled them in the interior recesses of their secret lodges, to propagate the worst of doctrines.

Its general character; at least so far as one not initiated into any of its mysteries can judge, appears to be, an innocent farce or mummery; a social meeting, without any sinister views; among whom some secret signs are established whereby to distinguish any of the brotherhood wherever they chance to meet; into which many enter out of curiosity for the sake of knowing the mysterious secret; and which secret they feel readily inclined to keep, lest they should be laughed at by the bye-stander for having been so duped. If this be the case, in this there is no harm.

But in the establishment of such an order of secret compact, independent of the laws of the community; and in the principles on which it is conducted; experience has proved there is much harm. Of

this

this too we shall see more by and by: and that the deceivers of the world, having insinuated themselves into that brotherhood, however innocent the institution might have been in itself, have found it a powerful engine in their hands for the propagation of the mischief they had devised. But we will leave them also for the present, and go on.

About the year 1775 there arose in Bavaria a most infamous and abandoned libertine, with a mind and a heart fraught with mischief; who, less known to the generality of the world by his writings than Voltaire or Rousseau, imbibed the full degree of hatred they had shewn to christianity and all existing governments; and carried on their plan to greater lengths, and with redoubled ardor: Weisshaupt, the founder of that class of men called the Enlightened or Illuminated. These have extended the mischief beyond all bounds of calculation.

The Founder not merely a Deist, or disbeliever in revelation, but a professed Atheist, a denier of there being any God who formed the world, and to whom man may be accountable for his actions; not one who questions the foundation of government, whether it did or did not arise originally from the will of the people, but who denies the propriety of there being any government at all upon earth, any rule to govern the actions of man beside his own inordinate passions; formed in his malevolent heart the project of secretly undermin-
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ing every bulwark which the wisdom of the orderly had raised against the turbulence of the disorderly; and casting the eyes of his imagination around him, like the infernal spirit, saw the respective rules of two very different orders conducted on a plan which might be improved, or more properly one should say be debased, to his purpose: the implicit obedience of the Jesuits to their superior, and the secret orders of the interior lodges of Free-masonry.

From the Jesuits he borrowed the idea which well suited his designs, of establishing a Society of men, who should be dispersed in every nation, and at the elbow of every potentate; with a subordination of ranks among themselves, the lower ones implicitly obeying the commands of their immediate superiors, and by whom every action of their lives was watched; and all of them respectively obedient to the command of one head, whose mandates they were bound to obey, without being suffered to inquire the reason, or hesitate one instant on the performance, under the pain of death from the secret emissaries of the superior of the order. This had been the plan of the institution of the Jesuits; and this was well adapted to the designs of Weishaupt.

From the Free-masons he borrowed the plan of secret Clubs. Combinations of men, who under oaths of secrecy should be capable of concerting schemes unknown to the world: who, by secret signals could distinguish each other in every place; and

and being already dispersed in various nations, were ready in every country, to be employed to any purpose at the shortest signal. However innocent the plan of free-masonry might have been in itself, its members were not all of the same cast: and the secrecy observed among them, while it enabled some to pervert the institution, served the purpose of this deceiver to mislead great numbers into the most horrid plots.

The plan of the institution itself was like that of the Jesuits: to teach but little at first to the raw pupil, but to instruct him farther in the views of those who had farther designs, as he should be found to answer their expectations. Where the least compunction of conscience was discerned, all farther instruction stopped: The party was left there to remain, without ascending to a higher class; unless he had already been taught so much, that it was held unsafe to place any confidence in him; when private methods were used, as they were always held over his head on any symptom of remorse in him, to take him off.

Into this society of free-masons, Weishaupt and his partizans introduced their more enlightened followers; and proceeding readily and without scruple to all the lengths to which the worst of the free-masons had before that time proceeded, he led them on by his emularies to greater enormities than ever had entered into any of their ideas; till from liberty and equality, said to be the watch-

watch-word of free-masonry, they went on to an avowed combination against all religion, all government, and all good order among men.

Of all this no doubt can be entertained. The Elector of Bavaria, when intimation of these things came to his knowledge, seized some of the parties in 1785; and obtaining at that time great numbers of their confidential papers, published them to the world; keeping the originals among the records of his court, and inviting the inquisitive to resort thither and examine them with their own eyes.

Yet did not this stop the progress of the mischief. Weishaupt himself escaped: so did some others of the principal leaders: others were banished the electorate: and all of them becoming more exasperated, only hastened their plans the more, to disturb the peace of mankind.

The court of France, surrounded and besieged as it was, with the false philosophers of Voltaire, the followers of Rousseau in his ideal scheme, and the enlightened of Weishaupt, having had many of the adepts belonging to each sect, introduced imperceptibly into every department, and become leading men at the head of affairs in that nation, was ripe for an explosion when the signal should be given.

The time for that signal was now arrived. The distress in the finances of that court, and the disposition of the last king of France to relieve the burthens

burthens of his people, and to consult their wishes, gave rise to a meeting of the nobles for that purpose; a meeting secretly instigated by those who wished for a new scene of things.

At the head of the free-masons in France, and grand master of their order, was that infamous wretch the last duke of Orleans (who afterwards took the name of Egalité or Equality; though it is well known that the obtaining of the crown itself, was the real object at the bottom of his heart) having under him little short of 300 regular lodges of free-masons, dispersed in as many towns in that nation, subject with implicit obedience to his nod. A general meeting of them was summoned at Paris; and did meet in the church of the Jacobins, one of the religious orders at that time. To this very numerous meeting of the free-masons, some leading disciples from Weishaupt were sent as delegates: delegates from other clubs and other societies to inflame these with the farther designs of the enlightened or illuminated followers of Weishaupt. In that they succeeded too well. To the liberty and equality of original free-masonry; to the fierce rancor of Voltaire and his self-called philosophers against Jesus Christ and his religion; to the democratic principles of Rousseau, and his visionary schemes about the origin of all government; these delegates added, the rage of Weishaupt and his pretended more enlightened followers, against all kings, or rather against all who under any title bear

bear any rule among men. The fiery spirit of the French, kindled at once into a flame. The names of free-mason, of philosophers, of friends to a social compact, of illumine or enlightened, were from that instant all absorbed in the one name of Jacobin. The others are heard no more. Jacobin became the name; liberty and equality the watch-word; while a rancorous hatred against all good order and all good faith among men, was the object, openly pursued from that day by a most numerous Horde; which had been training up gradually during 60 years to a most stupendous highth, to become the scourge of the earth.

What effect it had in France, is too well known. And the effect it has had on other nations, is well known too: though all these secret causes which have conspired to produce those effects, are not so generally known, because they are not of common observation.

In France, these various sects comprised a great part of their nobility, and the leading men of the state. In other nations on the Continent, the same was the case. These votaries of Satan, dispersed over most countries, had insinuated themselves even into the cabinets of princes: while themselves and all the various Clubs and Societies to which they belonged, were all of them as puppets, guided by one common mover behind the curtain: thwarting the measures of government in each nation, betraying and deceiving the commanders of

their forces against the common enemy; calling off some of them in the day of battle by the imperious command of the superior of his class; and causing others to open the gates of the strongest holds to the ravening incursion of French invaders.

In this nation, thanks to the Almighty, it has not been so fatal. The plague has not spread so here. The leading men among us, have for the most part been free from the infection. And even of those who from a spirit of opposition to the minister of the day, had taken some share in societies of an evil tendency among us; as soon as that evil tendency was discovered, notwithstanding in some their inveteracy against their opposites has continued greater than may perhaps be justified, yet they have withdrawn themselves from the Society. This must be said to the honour of very many of respectable character among us.

Yet Societies there have been in this nation, far more numerous and of far more evil tendency than the generality suspect. If the society of Freemasons of this country are in all their lodges clear from this infection, many, very many Societies there are under other denominations, which certainly are not so clear. Their adopting all the forms of the French societies, and their corresponding with the Jacobin clubs in France, and such of their own declarations which have come to light, prove in glaring colors, that their views are the same: and

he is blinded by prejudice who does not see it, or attached to their cause in his heart who is unwilling to acknowledge it.

To recount them all, would far exceed the abilities of the author of this address, and surpass the bounds he has set to himself in it; which is, in a short way to furnish you with the reasons which have moved him to take so decided a part as he did lately, against the introduction of a branch from a new Society into his parish. This has required haste, which he fears may be observable in the composition. For he wished you to be well apprised of the mischief that would have attended you, if he had slept: and therefore has endeavoured, that without the interval of many weeks, those who perhaps blamed him at the first, might see there was a cause; and might themselves join with him, in warding off any progress of Intruders into his Fold.

The one general and ostensible plea upon which all the Societies set on foot in this nation have been proposed, has been, as a society to obtain a Reform in parliament: pretending, as if parliament, or rather the house of commons, were degenerated from its original institution, and called for a reformation or a restoration to its pristine design.

A reform never was in the idea of Voltaire; his professed aim was destruction: but reform was in that of Rousseau; and from his social compact, most of the arguments for a reform in our parliament have

been derived. So it was in Weishaupt: so it was in the pretended interior lodges of Free-masonry which laid claim to antiquity: the being more enlightened and seeing deeper into a mill-stone than other men; and finding or pretending to find a mysterious hidden meaning in every thing; and that all the rules and orders of society were infringements upon the natural liberty of mankind, served as a pretence for the secret mysteries in their interior lodges, which were unfolded gradually to the adepts alone; as means to obtain a reform in the whole constitution of mankind.

But what is that Reform which is so much sought in these days among us?

That every human institution may be capable of amendment must on all hands be allowed; and that if it is conducted by men, it will often depart from its original design, and may require to be called back again to it, must be allowed too: and that an ideal scheme may be framed, which the theorist in his closet may suppose preferable to any that has ever been established, may be allowed too. But this is not what is urged. It is pretended, and the uninstructed among the people are made to believe, that the members of our house of commons were strictly intended to be representatives of the people, the people at large, and appearing in parliament for them; and that every individual in the community, even of the lowest orders, ought to have a voice in the sending of such a representative.

tative. But where is this to be found? It belongs not to me to give an opinion of what ought to be or what ought not to be; or what would be better, or whether any other would be better than the present method of election: but I will affirm, that our parliament is certainly of a totally different origin: of an origin, far from consulting the will of the people, though in its present form best calculated for their good.

It consisted at first of great barons; too powerful to be neglected by our former kings, and therefore consulted by them on the great measures of government. When property became divided, and the barons or lords of freeholds numerous, and many of their freeholds small; the attendance of the lesser barons was irksome. Whereupon those within certain districts were allowed, as a favour to them, to depute one or two of their number to represent the rest. This was the origin of our knights of the shires: deputed by the freeholders or lesser barons in each county; but not by the people at large. To them afterwards were added others from the corporations or borough towns; deputed by the members of the corporation to watch the concerns of those towns, and the mercantile interest therein; but not by the people at large.

This is the true origin of our house of commons: in which is nothing to be found, of its members representing the people. I say not, whether it ought to be otherwise than it is, or could be better

upon the whole ; but I do say, that our house of commons never was any other than this. And therefore it is throwing dust in the eyes of those who by their education cannot have looked into these things, to talk to them of a réform ; and call upon them, the bulk of the common people, to stand up for a reform, and a restoration of their rights of election, and universal suffrage, as now is frequently done by factious declamers ; whereas such rights, by the constitution of this country, they never had.

The constitution of this country, is formed upon the gradual improvement of centuries ; and has prospered, and produced comforts to every individual in the nation, beyond what any nation enjoys upon the face of the globe : and surely it ought not lightly, or by unskilful hands be tampered with. The executive power is in a King ; who is entrusted with the power of doing good, but restrained from that of doing any act of oppression to his people. Between him and the commons are the Peers ; hereditary guardians of the realm ; as a balance against the encroachments of the one upon the other on either side. And there is a large number of persons of the first property in the nation in the house of Commons, chosen from among the people, to guard their rights ; and it is in their number, and the weight of their property, and their having the power of granting supplies or of withholding them from the executive power, and their not being able to tax the

the people without taxing themselves in a greater degree in proportion to their larger possessions, or making any laws to bind the people which do not bind themselves; it is in these, in this equipoise, that the freedom and happiness of this nation consists; and not in the members of the house of commons representing in any way the people at large. That they all are men, it is true; and as men they may any of them be guilty of mistakes; but under this kind of government the nation has prospered, and does prosper; and he must be a madman indeed who wishes to see it destroyed, and more than a madman who lends a hand to its destruction.

Yet has this been the real Object of all those numerous societies which of late years have started up among us, under the cry of a Reform, their aim has been the Destruction of that constitution of government under which the nation has so long flourished, and is at this day the envy of all others.

Was not a reform in parliament, the ostensible plea, held out by the Society for constitutional information at the Crown and Anchor tavern?

Was it not that of the London Corresponding Society?

Was it not the plea of the Society calling themselves the Friends of the People, held at the Free Mason's tavern?

Of the Sheffield Constitutional Society ?

Of the Leeds Constitutional Society ?

Of the Nottingham Society for promoting a parliamentary reform ?

What were the pretended objects of the societies at Norwich, at Manchester, at Bristol, at Coventry, at Nottingham, at Derby, at Leicester, at Birmingham, at Newcastle, at York, at Hereford, at Edinburgh, and at various other places ? A reform in parliament.

What were the motives held forth to the public for the Societies of United Britons ?

Of United English ?

Of United Scots ?

Of United Irish ?

What were those of the Scotch Convention ?

Of the British Convention ?

Of the Secret Committees in various places ?

What was the ostensible plea urged by them all ? A reform in parliament. To which they added universal suffrage, annual elections, &c. &c.

And what was the real and true motive for all these at the bottom ? Their intercourse with the Jacobins at Paris ; their correspondence with the Convention there ; the forms of all their proceedings on the French Jacobinical model ; their sending of Delegates thither, and receiving delegates from thence ; speak it in language too plain to be misunderstood, that *Jacobinism*, the subversion of that

that constitution of government which has made this nation so great, and all its people so free and so happy, that *Jacobinism* was their aim, and French Emissaries the movers in them all.

Voltaire, when he set about his plan for confounding and perverting the opinions of mankind, poured forth books after books to mislead them. The same has been the method observed by these leaders of sedition among us. Innumerable have been the publications, issued in every corner; re-tailed at low prices, and given away at the expense of the Societies, to pervert and lead captive the sense of the nation.

Weishaupt, knowing that the judgement of the multitude is guided often in a great degree by Reviews and periodical publications; and that the tone given by Booksellers to the characters of books influences the opinion of those who enter their shops; instituted a Club or Society, to draw booksellers to the interest of his cause; and by paying them out of the common chest for the suppression of some, and giving undue characters of other publications, they forwarded the circulation of such as favoured the wicked cause he had espoused, and suppressed or put by those which would have undeceived the world. The same has been too much the practice here. It is not to be said as so general among us; but it is not unpractised: And German books, and German plays, reckoned to be of the same tendency, are extolled to the
 skies,

skies, and translated into our tongue, and circulated with industrious care among us.

Another method was set on foot in very early days abroad. D'Alembert and Diderot, two of the first associates of Voltaire, went about from place to place to draw on a dispute upon religious subjects. The former a pretended believer and well-known acute reasoner, always suffered himself to be baffled in argument by Diderot, an avowed infidel; by which insidious arts, the gaping bystanders were misled into a supposition, that religion and the proofs for Christianity were not defensible. By the same vile arts the unwary multitude have been misled in the Debating societies among us: Societies, pretending to free debate, for the discovery of truth; but really set up, for the purpose, and conducted artfully with the wicked design, of perverting it.

But beside the Societies for debate, there have been abroad, and in imitation of them there have been here, itinerant Lecturers on political and other subjects, who, under the plausible pretense of instructing the people, have insensibly instilled into their minds the principles of Infidelity on the one hand, and of Treason on the other. Of them we have had many in various parts of the nation; till by an act of the legislature such lectures were suppressed.

Yet did not that put a stop to the mischief. It only turned the foul stream into a different channel.

nel. The poison has still continued to be conveyed, and is spreading through a medium perhaps more dangerous; as it deceives the unwary and well-meaning heart, under a more specious form; and catches the attention of those who never would have thought of attending lectures upon politics. Schools have been opened by members from some of these Societies, intruding themselves unasked into different parishes under the plausible name of Sunday Schools for instructing the children gratis, and Sunday discourses for the young and the old too; wherein, after a little footing has been gained in a neighbourhood, often too ready to catch at any thing that is novel, these Itinerant preachers begin to unfold principles of a seditious tendency, and to disperse books of the same insidious cast. Of this there have been many, very many instances, ever since the suppression of the public lectures. And therefore it was, that hearing one Sunday morning a fortnight since, of a Sunday school, and two Sermons having been announced for that day in my parish, without any previous communication with me upon the subject, I took the alarm; and considered it as a duty I owed to you, immediately to declare my disapprobation of it.

You and I have lived together now bordering upon thirty years: and you all know that notwithstanding the duty of this parish is small in comparison with many others, you have had beside myself,

self, a Curate constantly resident among you the whole time: and I am confident you cannot say that any part of our office has been omitted or carelessly performed. You all know that in relation to your children, beside a small subscription school we have in this place, I myself pay for the daily instruction of all the rest whom you are willing to send for instruction. They all are taught from the time they are capable of instruction in reading, till it is proper they should begin to turn to some method of earning a subsistence for themselves; and books are distributed among you, to all who are willing to profit by them. So that in this parish, whatever might be the case in another, neither a Sunday school nor itinerant Preachers can be wanted.

Conscious of these truths it was, that I so pointedly set my face against the plan the instant the whisper of it came to my ears. You know that I intrude not into the fold of another; nor ever have forbidden any of my flock from going, if they so choose, to attend the doctrines preached to any neighbouring congregations: but I am always jealous of others intruding upon mine. There are various undefinable sects, differing essentially from each other, yet passing in these days under the general denomination of Methodists, against the introduction of whom into this place I frequently have cautioned you. Not that I would reprobate them all, far from it. Many of them are pious and

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indefatigable Christians. Though they differ from me in the interpretation of some passages in the holy scriptures, it is no more than I do from them; and, as they would not choose that I should intrude into their fold, to mislead as it would appear to them their flock; so neither can they on cool reflection wonder, that I should wish them, not to encroach upon mine.

But among those called Methodists, there are many of a very different cast: whom the sober methodists themselves would no more countenance than I should: wandering enthusiasts they are, who know nothing of the principles of christianity, or even of sound reasoning upon any of its doctrines; but perverting the words of scripture, catch the ear with declamatory rant, and are often, very often seen to overpower the pious heart, and drive their best disposed attendants to madness. Against them I have always thought it my duty to caution you. Yet is it out of an eagerness to follow these, because they pass under the general denomination of methodists, that so many are found ready in every place to listen to every intruder.

But it is not against the Methodist, the true and conscientious methodist, or those ignorant pretenders to that name, that I now caution you: it is not against the Presbyterian, the Independent, the Baptist, or any sectary dissenting from our church; but against the false Jacobin; against receiving or in any way giving encouragement to those emissaries

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from *seditious societies*; or suffering your children; or suffering yourselves to attend their lectures, under whatever specious name they may assume; or permitting them to circulate their books among you; or to instil into you or your children those principles of disobedience, which the Jacobins of France, and all those offsprings from them the Jacobin Societies in England, have been and are so zealous to disseminate among the people, and plant in every corner of this happy land; hoping by such arts to reduce us to the same shameful level with themselves.

This it was, and knowing the pains taken by these French emissaries, that determined me to so decided a part, on the first intimation of their beginning to make an attempt here.

On inquiry I found all my suspicions verified. The parties who so kindly, and out of pretended benevolence undertake to instruct my people for me, are members of a society, calling itself the *Union Society of Greenwich*: the same, as I am informed, which under the name of an *Itinerant Society*, had been driven from a public-house in that neighbourhood some little time since. Lest their benevolent intentions should be disappointed by any inquiry of the master of the house they wished to hire, the leader of that at Greenwich came himself to secure it; and slipping a half guinea into the hand of the landlord, like an entrapping recruiter, declared the bargain made. The

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landlord wished to return it, but they refused to let him off. I leave it to you to judge, whether this could be done with any but with a sinister design?

I hope the stir I made, and your consciousness of my zeal in it being exerted purely for your good, will disappoint this effort of that society, which is more than suspected to be of a seditious tendency. When the plague is near our borders, we must draw a line around us, and keep out the infection. To stop it after it has taken effect, is more difficult: and a greater plague than the Plague of Jacobinism, has never infested mankind. Satan, our great enemy, is described by an apostolic pen as wandering about seeking whom he may devour; and we are commanded by the like authority to resist him and he will flee from us: and surely it behoves us all, to resist these enemies of mankind, who like infernal spirits are seeking to destroy every thing that is good. We may hope that if we resist them, they will flee from us, like the great fiend their leader.

Hitherto this nation has, through the kind protection of Providence, withstood the attack. Our King (God bless him and save him to us!) has never trod in the paths of vice, or shaken hands with infidels. Our Leaders have not imbibed the infectious principles of Voltaire, Rousseau, or Weishaupt. He reverences the god of his fathers, the God of Gods, and Lord of Lords; and feels himself strong under that protection; and thereon rests

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his cause. They under that guidance, have been empowered to discover with watchful care and baffle the secret machinations of the enemy, just on the eve of execution: and watchful care must ever be continued against so treacherous a foe. The same watchful care is a necessary duty to every individual among us; and the same reliance upon Providence to prosper our endeavours to discover and defeat the wiles of the enemy; who now intrudes with his diabolical artifices into the secret recesses of our hearts, and contaminates the source of all the comforts of social life. Other nations we have seen overthrown, or crumbling to pieces around us: while ours almost alone has stood the convulsive shock. May we continue true to ourselves, and stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free: then may we yet be safe.

The French in their atheistic zeal, true to the character of a frivolous and licentious people, rejecting the God of their fathers, have brought the ashes of Voltaire and Rousseau from distant countries, and deposited them in one of their temples; and there have set up the busts of those two perverters of mankind, like the heads of heathen deities, to receive the homage of the people. Yet, not content with this, in a large assembly called together under pretense of paying honours to the goddesses of reason; setting up, not a statue, but a notoriously abandoned female to personate that goddess,

goddess, exposed her in a manner which decency forbids to be described, before the whole multitude, to inflame their passions to madness, and prepare them for any acts of insanity, which the movers wished them to perpetrate.

During ten years now elapsed; their government overthrown, under the specious idea of amendment or reform in the constitution; while democracy or republicanism has been the name, and liberty and equality the pretended basis of their new government, and a hatred of despots the war-hoop against other nations; revolution has succeeded revolution, massacre has followed massacre, despot has reigned after despot in France itself; and France itself is now ruled with a rod of iron, by the despotism of five tyrants, more despotic and more tyrannic than ever sat upon any throne since the world began. This is liberty, this is equality in France.

And what is the shadow of liberty that people enjoy? Obscene plays, and licentious actors in every corner, and most indecent dresses in their actors and their dancers, to keep up the fury of the people and make them forge their chains; while the annihilation of their trade, and the cessation of their manufactures, impoverish them, and render them more subservient to the will of their despotic masters.

This is liberty and equality, the blessed fruit of Jacobinism, in France.

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And what have been the fruits of it in other nations ? Professing to support the disaffected in every state against their rulers, and through French emissaries endeavouring to foment disaffection in them all ; the French marauders have made a plea for invading all ; and, through the secret orders issued to the members of their select Societies dispersed in every nation, have learnt the designs of the enemy, or have drawn off the commander in the day of battle, or have got the gates of their principal fortresses opened to receive the invaders ; or got themselves invited as protectors, or received as avengers of the oppressed : and no sooner have they been received, whether as friends, as foes, as allies, or as conquerors, than they have levied unmerciful contributions upon them all, to gratify the hungry maw of their five despots ; and by the pillage of one country, maintain a licentious banditti to go on to farther conquest. In this way, and by arts like these, which we must expect will be practised upon us if we are induced to shake hands with them, Flanders, Holland, Spain, part of Germany, Switzerland, Piedmont, Sardinia, Venice, and Italy from the Po to Naples, have been added to their domain : and every people that has received them in any way or on any terms whatsoever, has rued the day that ever Jacobinism entered their bosom ; or ever they condescended to treat with wretches, whose professions are to despise all former and existing treaties ; and who have no principle whereon

it is possible to place any security or confidence in any new treaty they may ratify.

Thanks to the Almighty, we yet are safe. And if we deserve to retain the name of Britons, we never will shake hands with France, till she returns to a sense and an acknowledgment too, of her dependance upon God. Many and many an attempt has been made by her emissaries, to elude the vigilance of our rulers; and, were not our rulers guided by an over-ruling power, ever wakeful to those who acknowledge his hand over them, these miscreants might have succeeded here too. But we have been rescued in a most astonishing manner more than once. We have seen our danger: and, placing ourselves under the protection of the Almighty, we have exerted ourselves, and sought his aid to enable us, to ward it off.

We of this nation seek not an ideal liberty unknown: we know and feel the value of true liberty and true equality too; the liberty of commanding ourselves and our own household, the liberty of enjoying our own property, secure against the attacks of the licentious; and we think it no abridgment of our liberty to be restrained from doing that wrong to another which we should reckon injustice if it were done to us: and we feel that we enjoy the equality of a free people, equality in its true and desirable meaning; the equality of a people living under laws which defend equally the oppressed of every rank against the oppressor.

We reap in comfort the fruits of our own industry, be our station ever so low in the community; and we know that, if we are true to ourselves, those fruits of our industry will descend secure to our children and our children's children; secured by the laws of our country against any undue requisitions of our superiors. We feel the benefits of commerce flowing with a full stream into this happy island; and we shall be fools indeed if we barter them for the visionary idea of any benefit from fraternization with the French, those enemies of all mankind. We know that a portion of our property, whatever that property be, whether it be large or small, is well expended, when it is given for the protection of the rest: well assured as we are, from what we have seen in every nation which has shaken hands with the French, that no property is secure as soon as ever they set the sole of their feet upon the land. And we have done well, and shall do well, with our persons or our purses, or with both, to exert ourselves like Britons to the last extremity, to keep them off. Scarcely is there a man of the smallest property in the nation, if he be not tainted with the infection of Jacobinism, but is sensible of these truths; and has stepped forth like a true Briton, and shewn himself convinced of this. The Jacobin emissaries of France, have tried to mislead the unwary; and in some few instances they have done it, and kept back some from entering into or supporting any of the volunteer corps.

which have so nobly stood forward to defend their country against foreign or domestic foes. Alas! at one time they had succeeded too well in misleading the sailors, and paralyzing our arm in its strongest sinew. By the forms observed among the mutineers, all of them on the French Jacobinical Model, it was manifest at the time, that it was not a scheme of English sailors, but that they were deceived and led on by French emissaries. But the sailors have seen their error, and washed off the stain, by repaying the shame on the heads of those whose emissaries had so deceived them. The victories of Camperdown and the Nile, which were subsequent to that disgraceful scene, have fully proved the true spirit of British tars. They may be deceived by Jacobinical artifices, unknown to honest hearts: but can never be warped from their integrity; or forfeit the character they ought to sustain and ever have sustained, in the day of battle.

Thus have I endeavoured, though in a hasty way, to point out to you the danger to which we are all exposed; more through the secret machinations of Jacobin emissaries of France, under the specious names of patriotic societies, or societies for religious or political instruction, than from any open attack which it is in the power of France to make. Indeed their navy is most of it brought into our ports; their seamen are in our prisons: and thanks to the Almighty, that army of plunderers they so proudly stiled their army of England, cannot in any force

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set foot on this sea-girt island, unless we prove false to ourselves and to each other. Even of their own shipping we have taken enough, and more than enough, to cope with all they have remaining, if they dared to come out and meet us in the open sea: and should a few stragglers chance to escape the vigilance of our commanders, or winds adverse to us afford them an opportunity of making a landing on our coasts, the strength of the nation, prepared as it has been against such an event, must soon make them pay dear for the attempt.

Even in this small Parish you know they would not find us quite unprepared. At the time of the mutiny at the Nore, the Yeomanry Troop of this parish was found of no small service, in scouring the country, and searching out the seditious, and keeping the rest in awe. Should the French make good a landing on the Kentish coast; though the industrious mechanic or labourer have not yet been called off from their occupations to form a corps of volunteers, before occasion rendered it necessary; yet the name of each man among you is set down on a list in my hands, with the respective part that each is most willing or thought most fit to take on such an emergency; and I trust we all of us shall turn out as Volunteers in such a cause; the cause of ourselves, and our nearest and dearest relatives. The station and age of your Pastor preclude him from taking a very active part: but you shall find in him a heart as sound as in the youngest

youngest breast; to lead you on, or to follow you; to advise or to be advised by you; to keep you his dear children together in so just a cause, or to take the charge of your wives and your children while you exert your greater strength in their defence.

Never shall you see him yield to France, or shrink back in the day of battle, or keep aloof in any one respect whatsoever. However he pitied them at the first, he despises the whole nation, or may almost say he detests them now; the pusillanimity of the one half, and the perfidy of the other: frivolous pusillanimity, that flies its country or truckles to such tyrants: savage cruelty, that butchers thousands in cold blood, to forward an ideal scheme of fancied liberty, but real licentiousness.

Never shall you see your Rector sit supine; and suffer the insidious machinations of Jacobins and Jacobin emissaries, under the specious name of Teachers from any United Society whatsoever, to establish themselves unmolested within the district committed to his care. While life, while vigour last, he will call upon you all, who would be true to yourselves, to oppose it. He has lived among you now many years; and if you should prove so base to him, and so false to yourselves, as to admit any of these Jacobins among you; and to give them your countenance, by attending their insidious discourses yourselves, or suffering your children to
attend

attend their school in preference to his; with his dying breath he will endeavour to recall you to your duty. French arts, French fashions, French politics, French language, which used to be familiar in his mouth, French emissaries, French societies, French jacobins, or English jacobins on a French model, not any thing that is French shall you ever find him disposed to countenance: They have proved themselves a perfidious nation, a nation governed by infernal spirits in the human form, and with his latest breath he must cry out against placing any confidence in them. Should that nation ever so far return to its senses, as to acknowledge a God, to whom men are accountable for their actions; and should they from such an acknowledgment, have some principle whereon to rest the basis of a treaty of peace; he hopes that our Rulers will consider them as so far degraded from the proud rank they have assumed to themselves, as on such an occasion to refuse to treat with them in their own tongue. They can speak ours when they please. In their own they will certainly chicané.

Here then I will conclude this address and explanation of a conduct which I trust that you all will see was not without sufficient cause; and I hope that you all will be found to concur with me in driving these Intruders from among us, and keeping out others from disturbing the peace of this harmonious parish. Yet I will not quite take

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my leave of the subject, without adding a few words more; recalling to your minds, what more peculiarly belongs to the station I have the happiness of holding among you: to exhort you to that, which alone can give you strength or confidence in the day of battle, if you should unhappily be called into the field; strength or confidence in any peace which may ensue the dire contest, which has now so long been maintained, and the issue of which may yet be distant. Let me exhort you to be true, to—what? to yourselves, and your dearest connections? Most certainly I must hope that you will be so. To your king and your country? My hope assuredly and my confidence must be the same. But while I have this hope, and would press these, which I consider as real Duties to every man in every station, another must be added, which is a duty far superior to these, and incumbent on us all, to be true to your GOD; the God of your fathers; who has saved them by his mighty protection, and enabled them to establish in this favoured island that form of government, under which it has so greatly prospered; and has secured to us an inheritance to all that liberty which a reasonable man can desire, and that security of equal laws which we enjoy, to bind the higher as well as the lower orders of the community, and restrain them from injuring each other: an inheritance which, through the gracious bounty of Providence, has descended to us all; and which it behoves us all to defend, and bequeath unimpaired to our latest posterity.

Let us, my beloved children, be found true to HIM who has been so gracious to us. When the host goeth forth to battle, let us put away from us every evil thing. Let us not turn our thoughts to the reforming of our *parliament*, but *ourselves*. Remember this, as the advice of your Pastor: that whereon his hope rests. Consider your ways: how far you feel convinced in your own breasts, that you do endeavour to make them acceptable unto God. You should not reprobate the French for their unbelief, and yourselves blaspheme. You should not blame them for neglecting Him; and changing the times and the days, in order, as they have done, to abolish all memory of His Sabbaths, and disregard His Sabbaths yourselves. Shew us your belief in God; and the awe you have of Him, and your love and gratitude to Him, by reverencing His Name in your conversation, and His Sabbaths in your attendance in your parish church. Shew us your belief in the revelations He has made to us through Jesus Christ, by joining with us in prayer in that holy name. Let me see you on those occasions more generally than I do. Let me see you at the holy Communion of the Lord's Supper. Remember that it was a dying command of Christ our Saviour, this do in remembrance of me. And let no one call himself a Christian, however he would feel offended at being denied that title by another, who never does remember Jesus Christ at the holy table. In this, my dear friends and neighbours, I must say you are sadly fallen off

of late. Permit me on this trying occasion to recall you to it, most earnestly; for they who deny Christ, or are ashamed of acknowledging him, or who disobey his commands, will be disowned by him when he returns again to judgment. Then let this call of your Pastor sink deep into all your hearts. The numerous attendance there used to be in this parish at the holy Table; not only of the old, but of the young of both sexes; not of the rich alone, but of the lower orders among us, whose souls are as precious in the sight of God as those of the highest among men; the numerous attendance I used to behold at our Communions, was a comfort indeed to your Pastor, for which he has repeatedly returned thanks to God. Let this hint move you, to afford him that comfort again. He is not selfish in that request: he knows it will be a comfort to yourselves too. Then, you may have hope, in the protection of God over you: then will he have that hope for you. And when he drops into the grave, which may probably be not far distant, he will feel the consolation of leaving you a people acceptable to the Lord; and the hope of meeting you in a better state, the darling flock of your faithful pastor;

FRANCIS WOLLASTON.

Chislehurst Parsonage,
April 22, 1799.

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